

ST. MARK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH  
Birmingham Industrial District  
1040 Tenth Avenue  
Thomas  
Jefferson County  
Alabama

HABS No. AL-935

HABS  
ALA  
37-THOS,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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ADDENDUM TO  
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Location: Thomas Historic District, 16th Avenue West at 10th Street West, Jefferson County Alabama.

Date of Construction: 1925-1938

Significance: St. Mark's is possibly one of few churches constructed of bee-hive coke oven stone.

Project Information: This report is based upon written documentation donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.

DESCRIPTION

The site contains a stone church, frame church, rectory, stone bandstand-gazebo and restrooms.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

At the turn of the century, Italians from tiny, rural communities of Sicily and southern Italy had immigrated to the Birmingham District and, by 1905, 50 families lived in Thomas and East Thomas. The bishop of Mobile sent Father Canepa, a native of Genoa, to build a Catholic church at Thomas and the Republic Company donated land outside the original Thomas tract for the site of St. Mark's Catholic Church, the first Italian church in the South outside the district of New Orleans.

Construction of the handsome church with a central entry and bell tower began in 1925, using stones from obsolete beehive ovens built by the Pioneer Company at the adjacent Thomas works. Additional historic buildings on the site include stone gazebo, bandstand and restrooms with Italian inscriptions and the original 1905 frame church, which was converted to a rectory in 1956.